

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 AEC-11

AECE-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

RSC-01 SCI-06 FEA-02 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 PA-04 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01 NEAE-00 DRC-01 /208 W

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P R 201721Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0510

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

USLO PEKING

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LONDON 6282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: BRITISH REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTING

REF: STATE 104647

SUMMARY: BRITISH PRESS REACTION IS MIXED. GOVERNMENT
CAN BE EXPECTED OEPIORE INDIAN MOVE BUT SEE NO WAY TO
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REVERSE IT. HMG LIKELY TO PUSH DISARMAMENT ISSUES MORE

URGENTLY BUT SHY AWAY FROM MEASURES TO SHOW DISPLEASURE TOWARD (FRIENDLY, COMMONWEALTH) INDIA. BRITISH NUCLEAR INTENTIONS WILL NOT BE AFFECTED EITHER BY INDIAN MOVE OR BY U.S. REACTION TO IT. MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR BRITISH LIKELY TO BE RENEWED IMPETUS GIVEN PAKISTANI ARMS REQUESTS. EXTENT TO WHICH BRITISH WILL RESPOND TO ANY NEW PAKISTANI REQUESTS NOT YET CLEAR BUT WOULD DEPEND IN PART ON HOW USG RESPONDED TO THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. IN REPLY TO REFTEL QUESTION (A), BRITISH PRESS REACTION MAY 20 IS MIXED. IT RANGES FROM STRONG CONDEMNATION BY LEFTISH GUARDIAN EDITORIAL (WHICH POINTS OUT INDIA ALREADY HAS THREE WORKING INSTALLATIONS FOR ITS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR NEEDS) TO SUGGESTION IN CONSERVATIVE DAILY TELEGRAPH THAT INDIA'S PEACEFUL INSTINCTS ARE SO FIRM THEY WILL WITHSTAND POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS, WHILE INDIAN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WILL LESSEN INDIA'S FEAR OF CHINA AND DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET UNION AS WELL. MIDWAY BETWEEN IS EDITORIAL IN TIMES WHICH SUGGESTS INDIA REALLY NEEDS FOOD MORE THAN WORLD INFLUENCE AND REGRETS THAT MOVE BRINGS FORWARD MOMENT WHEN OTHER COUNTRIES LIKELY TO JOIN NUCLEAR CLUB. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS ON PAKISTAN'S FEARS AND ITS PROBABLE ABILITY ALSO TO GO NUCLEAR.

2. BRITISH GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO DEPLORE DEVELOPMENT BUT NOT SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REVERSE IT. (FCO NOON BRIEFER DECLINED COMMENT ON PRESS QUERY MAY 20). IMPORTANT TO NOTE TWO CONFLICTING POLICIES FROM HMG POINT OF VIEW: ONE IS LABOR GOVERNMENT'S STRONGER COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT THAN THAT OF ITS TORY PREDECESSOR'S; SECOND IS HMG'S ACCEPTANCE, UNDER ANY GOVERNMENT, OF NEED TO KEEP INDIA'S FRIENDSHIP. THUS HMG LIKELY TO THINK MORE OF LIMITING DAMAGE IN TERMS OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY THAN OF TRYING TO MAKE ANY POINTS DIRECTLY TO INDIANS.

3. CONSEQUENTLY (IN REPLY TO QUESTION B), BRITISH ARE UNLIKELY TO TAKE SERIOUS MEASURES TO MANIFEST DISPLEASURE AGAINST INDIA.

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PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /208 W

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P R 201721Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0511

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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4. BY SAME TOKEN (IN REPLY TO QUESTION C), INDIAN TEST IS NOT LIKELY TO AFFECT UK'S OWN NUCLEAR CAPACITY, OR OVERALL REVIEW OF UK MILITARY STANCE PRESENTLY UNDER WAY. INDIAN EXAMPLE MIGHT ARGUE FOR MORE URGENT ATTENTION TO NPT CONSIDERATIONS, AS WELL AS WORLD DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS, AND THUS STRENGTHEN THOSE IN PRESENT BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHO WISH TO PUT HIGHER PRIORITY ON SUCH QUES-

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TIONS. IN LONG RUN, HOWEVER, BRITISH WILL BE CAREFUL NOT TO PURSUE NPT AND DISARMAMENT GOALS IN WAYS THAT MIGHT GIVE OBJECTIVE CAUSE FOR OFFENSE TO INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

5. IN REPLY TO REFTEL QUESTION D, ATTITUDE USG TAKES TOWARD INDIA IS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS IRRELEVANT TO UK'S OWN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS.

6. MAIN PROBLEM FOR HMG IS LIKELY TO CENTER AROUND RE-NEWED IMPETUS INDIAN NUCLEAR TESTING GIVES TO PAKISTANI REQUESTS FOR MORE SOPHISTICATED ARMAMENTS. SUCH REQUESTS ARE LIKELY TO SURFACE BOTH IN CENTO FORUM AND BILATERALLY. WE SUSPECT BRITISH WILL FEEL LESS JUSTIFIED IN CONTINUING TO REFUSE PAKISTANI DESIRE FOR ARMS - IF PAKISTANIS ARE ABLE TO PAY FOR THEM. HOW FAR BRITISH WILL RISK INCURRING INDIAN WRATH ALONG THIS LINE IS MOOT POINT. WOULD BRITISH, FOR EXAMPLE, CONSIDER SELLING THEIR MOST SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT TO PAKISTAN IF LATTER REQUESTED THEM? WE SUSPECT BRITISH WOULD NOT GO THAT FAR -- BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE SURE. WHAT USG DOES IN RESPONSE TO MORE URGENT PAKISTANI ARMS REQUESTS WILL NO DOUBT BE A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.

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